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# *Strengthening American Agriculture*

**through RESEARCH and EDUCATION**



**Office of the Secretary**

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



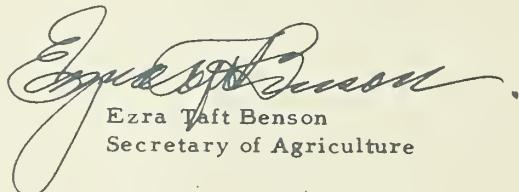
THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE  
WASHINGTON

August 14, 1953

It is my earnest desire to have the programs of the Department of Agriculture reflect what farm people want.

In recent months, I have talked with many farmers and with representatives of farm and other organizations, land-grant colleges, and others about a farm program. All of these people agree that the research and education phase of the agricultural program should be strengthened. The statement on the following pages is an attempt to summarize the suggestions and recommendations of these many groups and individuals on how this should be done.

I hope these proposals will stimulate full and frank discussion. Comments and suggestions will be most welcome.



Ezra Taft Benson  
Secretary of Agriculture

# *Strengthening American Agriculture*

## **through RESEARCH and EDUCATION**

### **long-range needs of agriculture**

Once again farmers are caught in a squeeze between rising prices for things they buy and lower prices for what they sell. This is just another in a whole series of comparable emergencies that farmers have had to face in the last 30 years.

Primarily we have been attempting to deal with these situations on a short-term basis. We shall have to continue to do so until we can work out a more permanent solution.

**research and education  
must be expanded**

The basic long-range needs of American agriculture are to reduce costs, to improve quality, and to expand markets. The sound approach to every one of these needs is through research and education.

We must think of the entire job, from the test tube right on through to the complicated business of running a farm and distributing farm products. It is the American way for farmers and marketing people to make their own decisions, but they need and expect the best available information if they are to make the right decisions.

The Cooperative USDA-Land Grant College system of research and education is the traditional and logical means of doing this job. But if this system is to meet the growing demands of modern agriculture, the system itself must grow. It must recognize the needs and develop plans and programs that *adequately* meet these needs.

# Farm production must be more efficient

**extension program is strategic**

The problems of modern farming, more and more, are demanding solutions that are both increasingly complicated and specific to individual farms. Thus, the entire USDA-Land Grant College system must become better organized and more adequately equipped to serve the individual farmer.

In this setting, the extension program is of strategic importance. An adequate extension program must bring the full resources of the entire system to bear on the problems of farming where they originate—on each individual farm. Mass education approaches alone cannot do this adequately.

The spearhead of an enlarged extension program should be an expanding farm advisory service in each county that will work directly with farm people, helping them to take research findings and fit them together so that they will work profitably on a particular farm.

**must serve individual farmers**

Through direct contacts, this advisory staff would become the channel for bringing to farm people technical and economic information needed

**applied research is foundation  
for extension**

**teamwork essential**

to develop sound long-range plans for their farms. It would likewise provide the continuing guidance the individual farmer needs (1) to profitably adopt new production methods as they become available, and (2) to make such changes in his production program as may be desirable to meet changing market conditions.

But the extension program can be no better than the research that supports it. First a vigorous program of applied research—closely integrated with extension—should be provided to bridge the gap between the highly technical and the practical considerations involved in adapting those results to individual farms. Applied research should answer two questions: Will it work? and Will it pay?

Strengthening this important work involves developing fully the “problem approach” to applied research, and drawing on “teams” of specialists to solve those problems. It must provide the information needed for developing farming systems and production practices which



**basic research the key  
to future progress**

**production must be  
geared to markets**

are adapted to the different soils and farming areas in each State.

Basic research has been the foundation of all of the really big advances in agriculture. If we are to look forward to continuing progress, it is necessary to provide more adequately for research in those fundamental sciences upon which all of agriculture rests. This is the source of new principles for the further improvement of our soils, plants and livestock.

If the cooperative USDA-Land Grant College system is to really come to grips with the problems of modern agriculture, it must face up to the ever-present needs of balancing total farm production with the kinds and amounts of products consumers want and will take at equitable prices. This involves an improved and enlarged program for providing current economic outlook and market information. It must provide realistic, forward-looking information to help farmers gear their individual production plans to the realities of the market.



# Marketing must be improved

## **marketing program must serve industry needs**

Development of an adequate research and education program for agriculture must go beyond promoting efficient and balanced production. It must find ways to improve marketing of agricultural products, if it is to serve the interests of farmers and all the people.

An adequate marketing and utilization program must be geared to the concept that everyone concerned will be benefited. Only to the extent that research is made meaningful and useful to individuals and organizations that perform the services and processes of marketing can either farmers or consumers expect to benefit from progress in this broad area.

## **marketing efficiency must be increased**

A wide range of opportunities for improving the efficiency of our marketing system falls in the field of applied research and technical assistance and training. An expanded marketing program should logically provide an on-the-spot problem-solving service. But, as in production, the marketing program must be continually supported by basic research.

### **better products**

We need more research on how to preserve farm-fresh quality and nutritive value of products on their way to consumers. Similarly, we need more research that will enable us to take full advantage of the inherent qualities of all farm products.

### **less waste**

Millions of tons of agricultural products are left on the farm and in marketing channels as waste. We must find economical uses for more of this material.

### **new markets**

We need to expand research on the development of new products from agricultural raw materials, new uses for existing products, and new processes that will expand present markets.

More research is needed to determine human and household needs and preferences for agricultural products. The nearer we can come to satisfying consumer needs, the greater will be our opportunities to expand markets.

### **liaison service between research and industry**

As a counterpart to the extension program for carrying production research to farmers, we need a greatly expanded technical liaison service between research and industry. Specialists in processing, manufacturing, and distribution would provide a two-way channel of needs and ideas based on marketing and utilization research and on the problems encountered in factories and markets.

## More opportunities for farm youth

### **youth development**

No program for the betterment of American agriculture should limit itself to dealing with those who now manage the farms and homes. It should look forward to the next generation, including those just entering farm careers. Therefore, this expansion of research and education calls for an increased emphasis on helping the farm boy and girl to acquire an early understanding of scientific methods and develop other qualities that will enable them to make their maximum contribution to the Nation's welfare.







